

Message Text

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FOR ATTENTION CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS

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TAGS: OREP (CODEL FLOWERS)
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

REF: (A) STATE 302218, (B) AMMAN 7364, (C) STATE 308090

1. TO BEST OF MY RECOLLECTION, AND HOPE CODEL'S STAFF
WILL RECOGNIZE THAT CONSIDERABLE TIME HAS ELAPSED SINCE
MY BRIEFING OF CODEL, MY DESCRIPTION OF REFUGEE SITUATION
WAS APPROXIMATELY ALONG FOLLOWING LINES.

2. I REVIEWED BRIEFLY THE SITUATION REGARDING PALESTINIAN
POPULATION IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE MIDDLE EAST
APPROXIMATELY AS FOLLOWS: (A) EAST BANK OF THE JORDAN--
AROUND ONE MILLION, (B) WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN -- ABOUT
650,000 PALESTINIANS (MOSTLY NOT REFUGEES), (C) WITHIN
1967 BOUNDARIES OF ISRAEL -- ABOUT 450,000 ARAB PALESTINIANS,
(D) IN SYRIA-- SOMETHING OVER 200,000, (E) IN LEBANON--
SOMETHING OVER 200,000, (F) IN THE GULF STATES AND
SAUDI ARABIA -- SOMETHING OVER 300,000, (G) IN THE REST
OF THE ARAB WORLD AND OUTSIDE OF THE ARAB WORLD-- ANOTHER
200,000 OR 300,000. STRESS WAS ON FACT THESE FIGURES
ARE APPROXIMATIONS.

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3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW MANY MIGHT RETURN
TO A WEST BANK STATE, I SAID LOCAL JUDGMENTS HERE WERE
THAT SOMETHING APPROXIMATING THE NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS
STILL IN CAMPS IN THE EAST BANK (ABOUT 200,000) WOULD
BE THE BEST CURRENT JUDGMENT. I INDICATED THAT NO
ONE REALLY KNEW WITH CERTAINTY ABOUT THIS BUT FACT THAT LARGE

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN CAMPS HAD LITTLE OR NO ATTACHMENT TO THE EAST BANK WAS REASON FOR SELECTING THAT FIGURE AS A REASONABLE GUESS. UNDOUBTEDLY SOME IN CAMPS WOULD STAY AS PORTIONS OF THEIR FAMILIES WERE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IN EAST JORDAN. SOME BUT PROBABLY INITIALLY NOT MANY OTHERS OUTSIDE OF CAMPS WOULD PROBABLY GO. CHARACTER AND NATURE OF ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT IN ANY STATE WHICH MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE CREATED IN WEST BANK WOULD OF COURSE HAVE AN EFFECT ON NUMBERS.

4. PALESTINIANS IN THE EAST BANK CONSISTED HALF TOTAL EAST BANK POPULATION. OF THESE, ALMOST 650,000 ARE ON UNRWA RELIEF ROLLS AND JUST UNDER HALF OF THEM RECEIVE FOOD RATIONS. UNRWA ALSO PROVIDES EDUCATION AND HEALTH BENEFITS FOR ALL REFUGEES REGISTERED WITH IT. JORDAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PERSONS DISPLACED FROM THE WEST BANK AFTER 1967 (SOME 200,000) WHILE UNRWA CARES FOR 1948 REFUGEES. AMMAN IS ABOUT 65-75 PER CENT PALESTINIAN AND HAS SEVERAL REFUGEE CAMPS NOW INCORPORATED INTO THE CITY PROPER.

5. REFUGEE ATTITUDES IN THE EAST BANK ARE DIFFICULT TO GIVE WITH CERTAINTY MOST PALESTINIANS PROFESS A STRONG PERSONAL INTEREST IN OBTAINING A SENSE OF IDENTITY AND NATIONAL EXISTENCE AS PALESTINIANS. MANY HOWEVER HAVE MADE THEIR WAY SUCCESSFULLY IN EAST JORDAN AND WOULD BE LOATH TO PULL UP ROOTS, PARTICULARLY WITHOUT STRONG INCENTIVES TO DO SO. JORDAN HAS PROVIDED PALESTINIANS WITH PASSPORTS AND RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP WHICH HAS NOT BEEN UNIFORMLY THE CASE IN THE OTHER ARAB STATES. MOST PALESTINIANS SEEM TO BE PLEASED WITH THE TREATMENT THEY HAVE RECEIVED IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EAST BANK AND THERE ARE FEW SIGNS OF ACTIVE MOVES OPPOSING THE PRESENT JORDANIAN REGIME WHICH IN ITSELF KEEPS A TIGHT HOLD ON THE INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM FOLLOWING THE EVENTS OF 1970. THE PALESTINIANS CONSTITUTE A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE JORDANIAN ARMY. MANY PALESTINAINS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL AS PROFESSIONAL MEN AND IN BUSINESS IN EAST JORDAN. PICKERING

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